



Both Sides of Time

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Imagine changing centuries--and making things worse, not better, on both sides of time.

Imagine being involved in two love triangles in two different centuries. What if, no matter which direction you travel in time, you must abandon someone you love?

Meet 15-year-old Annie Lockwood, a romantic living in the wrong century. When she travels back a hundred years and lands in 1895--a time when privileged young ladies wear magnificent gowns, attend elegant parties, and are courted by handsome gentlemen--Annie at last finds romance. But she is a trespasser in time. Will she choose to stay in the past? Will she be allowed to?

Both Sides of Time Details

Date : Published October 9th 2001 by Delacorte Books for Young Readers (first published July 1st 1995)

ISBN : 9780385729482

Author : Caroline B. Cooney

Format : Hardcover 224 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Science Fiction, Time Travel, Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Fantasy, Fiction

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Jenny says

I kind of bad-mouthed Caroline B. Cooney in my review of Lois Duncan's *Down a Dark Hall*, and now I feel bad because this book is so good!! Well, when I said she wasn't as skilled a writer as Duncan, I was really thinking of the Christina series, of which I read book one. I didn't like it, and it wasn't as good as other books I've read by Cooney. This book definitely redeems her in my view.

Annie, Devonny, Strat, Harriett, Bridgett, they're all well-written, realistic, sympathetic characters. The action is interesting, keeping me wanting more. The concept of the book, involving time travel, isn't new exactly, but Cooney puts an interesting spin on things by making Annie travel backwards in time by accident and then falling in love but feeling trapped between both sides of time (title reference purposeful, of course!). The plot moves swiftly, everything falls together nicely, and there is a very nice cliff hanger ending that makes me happy I took out all three books from the library at once, so I won't have to wait to find out what happens next. I know Cooney eventually added a fourth book, but this was called a trilogy first, so I'm guessing the last book was an afterthought. It's not at my library, but if I need to find out what happens after *Prisoner of Time*, I'll order the fourth book from interlibrary loan.

I recommend this book to lovers of YA fiction, to readers interested in fiction about time travel, and to people who love history, especially the Victorian Era, which is when Annie goes.

Cooney, I'm sorry that I doubted you!

Wendy says

I loved this book, one of the few modern time-travel books that I've thought was very good (since, say, the 1960s). Characters are funny and show hidden depths (or, as the case may be, characters are truly creepy). The writing is occasionally a little overwrought, but there are some real gems of sentences in here. Period details seem good to me.

Lindsay says

Loved this book so much in middle school!

rivka says

Like all three of the books from this series I've read so far, enjoyable YA fare with interesting historical and interpersonal notes. The first two must be read together; the third is a nice addition but not necessary to complete the first two. And the fourth (why is there always a fourth with Cooney series? ;)) looks interesting enough that I plan to get my hands on it.

hannah mercurio says

I'm not gonna right a full review cuz this book doesn't deserve it. IT WAS AWFUL! It was ridiculously cheesey and there was so much instalove. The writing style was so bad it felt like a first grader wrote it. Just yuck ew

Jennie says

Everyone in this book is an idiot. Which is OK, because most of the characters are teenagers and everyone knows that teenagers are idiots. I can say that, because I used to be one.

Both Sides of Time, by Caroline B. Cooney, is a book I read MANY MANY times when it came out, a book I loved because it contained NOT ONLY a sassy heroine, smitten hero, and love story, but TIME TRAVEL. My tastes? They have not changed much (see: Lost, Doctor Who, Safety Not Guaranteed, etc).

The only thing I really remembered about this book was that the heroine somehow went back in time. Which is pretty much all you need to know. Annie Lockwood, fed up with her distant boyfriend and her romance-missing life, somehow travels back in time, from 1995 to 1895. There, she meets Strat, a handsome, rich, almost-betrothed young man who obviously falls immediately in love with Annie, since she's completely unlike any other girls he's ever met. Meaning: she's a total harlot who appears out of nowhere with HER LEGS EXPOSED LE GASP!

In 1895, she breaks up the almost-engagement, learns what it was like to have servants dress her, and stumbles across a murder investigation, all while falling deeply and hopelessly in love with Strat, as only a teenager can.

I have to say, after more recently going on journeys with the likes of Katniss Everdeen, Beatrice Prior, and most especially Hermione Granger, I found the character of Annie Lockwood to be a bit lacking. This book was written in 1995 (and is JUST SO 90s) and I seem to remember there being an overabundance of these types of books around that time, each featuring a beautiful but damsel-in-distress-like heroine, bored with normal life but really taking no ownership over it, who at some point meets a beefy, handsome stranger who throws her life into turmoil. But in a good way. Usually.

Then again, it's unrealistic to expect teenagers to be proficient in bow-hunting or magic or, hell, even their FEELINGS, so I'm going to cut Annie some slack here. She's pretty preoccupied with her own family, which is falling apart, and, in the end, she makes a mature, grown-up decision, so good on her.

Something that cracked me up was the focus on how bad women used to have it. I mean, obviously, it's not funny that women used to have no power, etc, but the way it's brought up in this book, over and over and over again, was both awesome and completely heavy-handed. This book is for 12-year-olds, though, so I guess good for Cooney for making sure any girls reading would know how shitty things used to be?

(There is, of course, a sequel, which I will obviously be reading and reviewing. I mean, duh.)

Kayla Edwards says

Until running across one completely by accident a few weeks ago, I had completely forgotten these books existed. This is surprising since I was completely obsessed with them in middle school. I have always been a history buff so any tale where the heroine gets to travel back in time is right up my alley. I am no longer as smitten as I was back then (though middle school me is glaring over my shoulder demanding a 5 star review) but I still enjoyed this series.

This time around, I found myself a little disgusted with Annie and her passive, whiny nature. It feels as though she always needs someone else (or Time) to push her into action or make her decisions for her. She even openly admits wanting someone else to call the shots on several occasions. The other characters, however, completely make up for her wishy-washy nature. They step up to the plate and take control of their own destinies in a time when they should simply keep their mouths shut and do as they're told. I love it. And, by the end of the series, I was beginning to warm back up to Annie too.

All in all, I still enjoy these books!

Donna says

This is a time travel romance. Annie is from the year 1995. She has a boyfriend who doesn't even notice if she is around or not. Then she falls (literally) back in time to 1895. She becomes involved with people in that time and becomes involved in a love triangle. The problem is that she is hurtled through time without knowing why or how. Will she ever be able to stay in one time period?

I love time travel romances and this one is a pleasant one to read. It does leave a lot of questions that I hope will be resolved later in the series. I am intrigued enough to continue on the journey.

Abbi Davis says

I really liked this book! I got it because it looked interesting and one of my friends (zoe) told me she liked the author. It's about a girl that went back in time and had an amazing time! First, there was a murder mystery! Then, she met Strat, his sister Devonny, his stepmom, his dad, and his gf Harriet. Strat and the girl that went back in time fell in love, so Harriet is (obviously) heartbroken and is forced to go to desperate measures. I hope I've said enough to get you excited about it, but I won't say anymore in case you read it.

Jillian (PidginPea's Book Nook) says

I can't remember the number of times I read this series. Over and over and over. I loved Annie because she was just like me - a little awkward, a hopeless romantic, and better fitted for a previous century. I was infatuated with Strat. I was addicted to every book when I first got it until I finished it. I spent every spare moment dreaming of being in the 1800s with the two of them. Cooney gave me an obsession and I'm so happy I had it...and secretly still do have it.

Deborah Heal says

Annie is a “romantic in the wrong century,” but her boyfriend is more interested in his old cars. But one day at the derelict mansion outside of town, when “something was wrong with the day, or something wrong with her” she falls back one century and falls in love with Strat, a boy who is everything she’s been dreaming of—everything her boyfriend is not. He is handsome, honorable, and heir to the Stratton mansion and fortune.

The 1880s seem incredibly romantic to Annie, so much better than her own ugly, plastic century. It is an age when men are men and women are women and no one mistakes one for the other. The men are charming and chivalrous. Their courtliness is so attractive to girl whose boyfriend expected her to load his tools in his truck for him. What could be better than to wear beautiful, feminine dresses and live in a luxurious mansion?

But it’s also a time of tremendous stiffness and formality. Even young people call each other by their formal titles of Mr. and Miss. And everyone is expected to “modulate” themselves and be subject to elaborate “rules of behavior.” Women’s lives are even more restrictive than the corsets they wear.

Strat is fascinated by this beautiful free-spirited girl that lands in his world. He is both attracted to and shocked by her unconfined body and bare legs. Unlike his peers, he seems willing to let her be who she is, and loves her in spite of her alien nature.

But Annie realizes that we don’t own time as we think we do with our clocks and watches. Time owns us. We are a product of our time. Will her relationship with Strat be sustainable in a world where men make the rules and govern the lives of their women, own their women? A world where a woman who doesn’t marry ceases to have any value? In Strat’s world women are so desperate for marriage that they sometimes give up relative freedom and a chance to go to college to marry repellant men old enough to be their fathers, men who only want their money.

Annie is a "Century Changer." She can choose which century she wants to live in. But no matter which century she chooses, someone will be unhappy. She has made a mess of it on both sides of time. If only she can keep everybody safe and still get a happily ever after for herself.

Deborah Heal, author of *Time and Again: Charlotte of Miles Station*. I bought this book.
<http://www.deborahheal.com>

Jason says

Somewhere between a guilty pleasure and a childhood favorite. When I was a kid I thought this book was so sweepingly romantic and believed that Annie and Strat's love was so true and heart-aching. But...they know each other for a total of, like, a day. If that. He also doesn't actually have much personality aside from being perfect and in love with her. She, meanwhile, is really narcissistic, selfish, and condescending. There is slightly a message about how romance is not the be-all end-all of life, but it's pretty buried under all the stuff about a women's uselessness if she doesn't have a man in her life (either in 1895 or 1995). It doesn't really feel like "commentary" on gender roles so much as it seems like the author thinks that it's simply true that

women are incomplete till they got a mate.

The mechanism for time travel is never cleared up. I mean, you could say that's on purpose, but it feels more like Cooney was lazy and just wanted to make that the plot device without any explanation.

Some side characters are nice though: Devonny (at least not in this book) doesn't really think about getting a husband, Florinda while needing a husband to survive in her society doesn't necessarily want to need one and shows surprising strength.

My words seem to merit a lower rating, but I still remember the book as being good so it still feels good somehow.

Viktoria Jean says

[Giving romance stories a second chance:] I was partly influenced by my best friend to read this book, for I'll never read pointless romance for I had once read a really mushy one that made me sick, with pointless sweet nothings in addition. Both Sides of Time. As if Time was a person with two faces, someone who can hear your cries, and hear your pleas and will then cruelly decide whether or not it shall fulfil your plea, which, after reading the book, I felt that it must have been what Annie Lockwood felt, being a century-changer, succumbed to time. Time is ALIVE and constantly moving ahead. Time waits for no one. And no one waits for time, as everyone moves on with their own lives and who would give a second thought to it? Time won't stop so why bother about it? Time is but another constant thing to most, but time was a race for Annie, for any moment later, she or Strat, could have vanished and never to have met again. In the case of the second book, it was Devonny [Strat's sister:] and Tod [Annie's brother:], whom were also brought together, and later separated, by time. This book[s:] taught me all about the concept of time, the part of time that i had never experienced. And now i wonder how it feels like to be able to manipulate centuries and switch between them as and when you like, for example when you absolutely hate a teacher, you can materialise in front of his/her eyes instantly and appear twenty years before as the teacher's friend or something. The world would be such a wonderful place to live in. I reckon history classes would be more interesting too, when we could appear in the middle of WW11 and live as the people had lived.

Speaking of the protagonist, Annie Lockwood is really a kindred spirit, someone i would have liked to know and i would have liked to have met. She is a lot like me in some ways, in the sense that she feels that her century isn't romantic enough. In Sec 2, my Literature teacher once said that Singaporeans are not romantic. Their meeting places often include 'that table in KFC' or 'you know that huge longkang?' or 'outside first floor toilet', never 'under that beautiful maple tree' or 'that beautiful Victorian house'. Annie Lockwood is the 'romantic living in the wrong century' for she feels she belongs in the time period where men were gentlemen and that women wore ridiculous huge hats and poofy dresses over tight corsets that literally take your breath away. It was exciting, when Annie fell back through time while riding on her bicycle, when her prosaic boyfriend in the 20th century was working on a car like a typical modern down-to-earth guy with no sense of how to please a girl, to the 19th century where Strat and Devonny lived---1895. How they met was very interesting, as Strat thought Annie was some soulless ghoul and out of curiosity for this beautiful girl, Strat followed her. He was also fascinated with the way Annie dressed, baring her legs like no other 19th century girl would ever dream of doing for their underwears were probably ten times thicker than Annie's white schooldress. The author takes on a Old Victorian man Voice, making strat so different from the 21st century guys. And Strat finally is able to talk to her when Annie finally noticed him and the two of them quickly became friends. But when Annie finally realises that she was doing a terrible thing to Strat's betrothed girl, Harriet, who loved Strat but was too shy and reserved, as all 1800s girls were. Yet Strat was

deeply in love with Annie and he was the love Annie ever wanted. What was heartbreaking was that time was beckoning and she had to go back, for she is only a trespasser of this time. Also, Annie feels very guilty for breaking Harriet's heart by appearing out of nowhere and steals Strat's heart, while she tries so hard but to no avail. Poor Harriet dies in the third book due to consumption. Annie finally leaves after a series of adventure. But the story doesn't end with the first book.

Katie says

This book is very simply written but beautiful. I can't recall how many times I have reread it. I must have started reading the series between ages 12-14 and now, at 22, I still love to read them.

The idea of a true love/soul mate existing generations before, in another time and space, is wonderfully portrayed in this series and beautiful. One of my favorite love stories :)

Amanda says

I think I read this book 500 times? and I forgot about it until JUST NOW. These books were amaaaaaaazing. like, AMAZING. there's like, making out in front of a fire and time travel and consumption and pretty dresses. I remember the ending of the quartet being real bogus, though, and causing a mild existential crisis (who are we REALLY, if we're not our memories? h/t Jose Chung)

Trin says

Oh, the ridiculous time travel melodrama of my youth! This was actually better than I remembered. Yes, Annie and Strat do find TRUE LOVE at FIRST SIGHT, and yes, the ending's a bit abrupt and not terribly well set-up. But I liked that Cooney kept this away from being total fluff by emphasizing how hard it would have been to be a woman—of any class—in the 19th century. Wow, books for teenage girls used to actually have empowering, feminist messages in them? Too bad that's gone out of style. *cough
TwilightyesIstillhaveissuescough*

Though I remember pretty distinctly reading this when I was 12, I never read the sequels. (Maybe our tiny town library didn't have them?) I intend to remedy that now.

Annie says

Read this YA series when I was in middle school. Have no idea what made it spring to mind again, but all I remembered was that the main character's name was Annie, like mine, and that she traveled through time. And that there was a very interesting character named Harriett who had tuberculosis in one of the books, I remembered her being in a sanatorium. Happily managed to find the name.

It's more engrossing than I remember, honestly. Strat, Annie's love interest, is a bit boring, and Annie is okay for a YA protag, but Strat's sister Devonny and friend Harriett are the real star characters here. They made

the book un-put-down-able.

Thomas Muriuki says

I Love it! This book started out so excitedly and turned out to be a lovely page turner encompassing two Love triangles of Lovers in two diferent Centuries and cultures that add to the tension and plot twists all the way to the last page.

Lisa says

Why my thirteen year-old time-travel obsessed self never came across this inter-century adolescent romance when it was first published in 1995, I'll never know. But, I'm sure that I would have loved "Both Sides of Time" as much then as I do now. At times, I felt that Cooney was trying too hard to make sure that her book was a "historical" novel that was also "educational" (stressing and re-stressing, for example, the resticted role of women in 1895 and the dominant power of men). At times, too, I wondered if Cooney's writing style was edgy and modern enough for today's teenage set, especially in the wake of a series such as "Twilight". But the story, *the story*, beautiful and romantic, surpasses all possible technical flaws. Here is a story I could read again and again at any age, a book I wish I would have written (with a few alterations here and there) and a journey through time that any girl in any century would no doubt love to take.

Sophia says

I know a book is bad when after every single chapter I find myself thinking, "yeah...so?" That being said, I got this book when I was eleven and I really should have read it then, before I had any real concept of writing and character development. This is literally like a story I would have written for sixth grade english. It's not unbearable at first, but it becomes frighteningly pathetic very quickly. Cheesy, "romantic" bull shit practically oozes from every page. The plot is shallow, the characters are uninteresting, and don't get me started on the...um..."love story." She falls back in time (how this happens, I might add, is never really explained. Yeah, I know it's a series but still...) walks on the beach with him for five minutes, and from then on they are both madly in love. No chemistry, no tension, no build up, nothing. I could care less about these two. The incessant proclamations of "Oh, Strat" and "I don't want a souvenir. I want Strat." make this book nothing more than a middle schoolers wet dream. Which is why, once again, I probably should have read this a few years ago. But I didn't, and I can honestly say I am so glad this reading experience is over.
